

## THE TWENTY SANGHA

Having previously explained the ten topics of the ten practice instructions, particularly the three objects of refuge (during the IBD spring course of 2012), which are the fourth topic, next comes an extensive explanation of the Sangha Jewel. The Sangha Jewel here refers to the Sangha in the strictest sense, that is, it refers to Arya beings who have directly realized emptiness. Therefore, the extensive presentation of the Sangha Jewel is in fact an extensive presentation of different types of Aryas.

The *Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in One Hundred Thousand Verses* lists 48 Sangha. Since these 48 types are difficult to understand they are abbreviated into 20 types. The twenty Sangha represent a classification of Hinayana Aryas (i.e. chiefly Hearer Aryas) who differ in terms of the realms they are reborn in, their attainments, the number of lives remaining before they attain the state of a foe-destroyer, etc. They are also called the metaphorical Sangha (*mtshon byed dge 'dun*, pronounced: *tshoen je ge duen*) because they illustrate particular Mahayana Aryas. The Mahayana Aryas illustrated here are called the 'actual' Sangha (*don gyi dge 'dun*, pronounced: *doen gyi ge duen*) - 'actual' in the sense that they are the Sangha that is illustrated. This will be explained below.

The twenty Sangha can be further abbreviated into eight Aryas. The eight Aryas refer to four *approachers to the results*, and four *abiders in the results*. The results are:

- 1) The result of stream-enterer (*rgyun zhugs kyi 'bras bu* / pronounced: *gyun zhug kyi dre bu*)
- 2) The result of once-returner (*phyir 'ong gi 'bras bu* / pronounced: *chir ong gi dre bu*)
- 3) The result of non-returner (*phyir mi 'ong gi 'bras bu* / pronounced: *chir mi ong gi dre bu*)
- 4) The result of foe-destroyer (*dgra bcom gyi 'bras bu* / pronounced: *dra chom gyi dre bu*)

The four *approachers to the results* are:

1. Approacher to stream-enterer (*rgyun zhugs zhug pa* / pronounced: *gyun zhug zhug pa*)
2. Approacher to once-returner (*phyir 'ong zhugs pa* / pronounced: *chir ong zhug pa*)
3. Approacher to non-returner (*phyir mi 'ong zhugs pa* / pronounced: *chir mi ong zhug pa*)
4. Approacher to foe-destroyer (*dgra bcom zhugs pa* / pronounced: *dra chom zhug pa*)

The four *abiders in the result* are:

1. Abider in the result of stream-enterer (*rgyun zhugs 'bras gnas* / pronounced: *gyun zhug dre nae*)
2. Abider in the result of once-returner (*phyir 'ong 'bras gnas* / pronounced: *chir ong dre nae*)
3. Abider in the result of non-returner (*phyir mi 'ong 'bras gnas* / pronounced: *chir mi ong dre nae*)
4. Abider in the result of foe-destroyer. (*dgra bcom 'bras gnas* / pronounced: *dra chom dre nae*)

Since the eight types of Sangha/Aryas and the four results are explained from the point of view of Hinayana Aryas it is important to understand the five paths Hinayana practitioners cultivate in their mental continua in order first to become Aryas and then to reach the state of foe-destroyers. The five Hinayana paths are:

- (1) The Hinayana path of accumulation
- (2) The Hinayana path of preparation
- (3) The Hinayana path of seeing
- (4) The Hinayana path of meditation
- (5) The Hinayana path of no-more-learning

### The Hinayana path of accumulation

The entryway to the Hinayana path is Hinayana renunciation, i.e. the sincere aspiration to attain self-liberation. Once practitioners generate such renunciation they enter the Hinayana path of accumulation. Hearers and Solitary Realizer trainees on the Hinayana path of accumulation have to accumulate sufficient merit to be able to proceed to the next path. Therefore they meditate on the four noble truths, the twelve links of dependent arising, love, compassion, generosity, and so forth.

Furthermore, unless practitioners realized emptiness *before* they entered the path of accumulation, they must now reflect on the various reasons that establish the ultimate nature of reality until they are able to

infer the lack of true existence of phenomena and thereby newly and conceptually realize emptiness, i.e. realize emptiness with an inferential cognizer.

Additionally, unless attained before entering the path of accumulation, Hinayana practitioners must also develop calm abiding. The attainment of calm abiding is followed by the cultivation of the union of calm abiding and special insight taking to mind an object other than emptiness. Once such a union is attained trainees set out to develop the union of calm abiding and special insight conceptually realizing emptiness. The first moment of such union marks the first moment of the path of preparation.

### **The Hinayana path of preparation**

The Hinayana path of preparation is attained when practitioners who aspire to attain self-liberation generate the union of calm abiding and special insight conceptually realizing emptiness. Such union enables them to gradually undermine the different coarser and subtler types of ignorance that perceive true existence. Therefore, like the Mahayana path of preparation, the Hinayana path of preparation can also be categorized into the four stages of heat, peak, forbearance, and supreme Dharma, which can be subdivided into small, middling, and great heat.

When during the four stages, Hearers and Solitary Realizer practitioners rise from the conceptual realization of emptiness, they continue to engage in the accumulation of merit by meditating on the four noble truths, the twelve links of dependent arising, love, compassion, and so forth.

Furthermore, by repeatedly familiarizing with the union of calm abiding and special insight that conceptually realizes emptiness, practitioners come closer to realizing emptiness directly. Once they generate the union of calm abiding and special insight directly realizing emptiness they attain the path of seeing.

The Hinayana paths of accumulation and preparation are both mundane paths, i.e. paths in the continua of trainees who have not directly realized emptiness yet.

### **The Hinayana path of seeing**

The first moment of the Hinayana path of seeing is marked by the meditative equipoise that *directly* realizes emptiness. Such first moment is an uninterrupted path which eliminates intellectually acquired afflictive obstructions. The uninterrupted path is followed by the path of release. It also directly realizes emptiness and achieves the cessation of intellectually acquired afflictive obstructions.

Thereafter, Hearer and Solitary Realizer practitioners rise from the meditative equipoise and with the subsequent attainment paths engage in the accumulation of merit by meditating on the four noble truth, generosity, and so forth.

With the attainment of the path of seeing Hinayana trainees become Aryas, for they directly realize emptiness. Hence, the attainment of the path of seeing also marks the attainment of the first supramundane or Arya path, since the three Hinayana paths of seeing, meditation, and no-more-learning are supramundane/Arya paths.

When practitioners who have attained the subsequent attainment paths of the Hinayana path of seeing once again enter into a meditative equipoise that directly realizes emptiness and serves as the antidote to the coarsest *innate* afflictive obstructions, their Arya path becomes the Hinayana path of meditation. Therefore, the first moment of the uninterrupted path that irrevocably eliminates the coarsest *innate* afflictive obstructions, and is generated after the subsequent attainment paths of the path of seeing marks the first moment of the Hinayana path of meditation.

### **The Hinayana path of meditation**

As just explained, the Hinayana path of meditation is attained when Hearer and Solitary Realizer practitioners attain the meditative equipoise that directly realizes emptiness and that eliminates the coarsest type of innate afflictive obstructions, i.e. big-big innate afflictive obstructions. As explained earlier (on Handout 15) innate afflictive obstructions can be divided into nine types: big-big, medium-big, small-big, big-medium, medium-medium, small-medium, big-small, medium-small, and small-small innate afflictive obstructions. Thus, the former obstructions are coarser and easier to remove than the latter so that big-big

innate obstructions are the coarsest type of innate afflictive obstructions and small-small the subtlest.

Since Hinayana trainees neither have to eradicate cognitive obstructions nor practice the ten perfections, their path of seeing and path of meditation are not categorized into ten bhumis. Nonetheless, they overcome the nine layers of innate afflictive obstructions gradually by repeatedly entering into meditative equipoise paths that consist of uninterrupted paths and paths of release, and that serve as the direct antidotes to one of the coarser or subtler types of innate obstructions. Hence, since there are nine types of innate afflictive obstructions there are also nine types of uninterrupted paths and paths of release that differ in their strength and ability to overcome the different layers of afflictions. The uninterrupted paths and paths of release that are the direct antidote to **big-big** innate afflictive obstructions are the weakest of the direct antidotes of the path of meditation and are thus called **small-small** path of meditation. The uninterrupted paths and paths of release that are the direct antidote to the **medium-big** innate afflictive obstructions are slightly stronger and hence called **medium-small** path of meditation, the uninterrupted paths and paths of release that are the direct antidote to **small-big** innate afflictive obstructions are called **big-small** path of meditation, and so forth.

The last moment of the Hinayana path of meditation constitutes an uninterrupted path which eliminates the subtlest **small-small** innate afflictive obstructions. It is called **big-big** path of meditation, as well as '*Vajra-like Concentration*'.

The subsequent attainment paths, which arise in-between the meditative equipoise paths of the path of meditation, engage in meditating on love, compassion, generosity, and so forth.

### **The Hinayana path of no-more-learning**

The first moment of the path of release that follows the *Vajra-like Concentration* and that attains the cessation of the subtlest innate afflictive obstructions marks the first moment of the Hinayana path of learning. Hearers and Solitary Realizers who attain the Hinayana path of no-more-learning are foe-destroyers (Arhats), for they have completely overcome the foe of afflictive obstructions.

<b><i>Mundane paths</i></b>		<b><i>Supramundane/Arya paths</i></b>		
<b>Hinayana path of accumulation</b>	<b>Hinayana path of preparation</b>	<b>Hinayana path of seeing</b>	<b>Hinayana path of meditation</b>	<b>Hinayana path of no-more-learning</b>
Entryway is renunciation. Unless attained before, trainees develop inferential realization of emptiness as well as union of calm-abiding and special insight. They also engage in accumulation of merit.	First moment is marked by union of calm abiding and special insight <i>conceptually</i> realizing emptiness. Such union undermines different types of ignorance perceiving true existence. Trainees also engage in accumulation of merit.	First moment is marked by union of calm abiding and special insight that <i>directly</i> realizes emptiness. Such meditative equipoise path eliminates intellectually acquired afflictive obstructions. Subsequent attainment paths engage in accumulation of merit.	First moment is marked by meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness that eliminates coarsest innate afflictive obstructions. Trainees repeatedly enter into meditative equipoise paths which eliminate different layers of innate afflictive obstructions. Subsequent attainment paths engage in accumulation of merit. <i>Vajra-like Concentration</i> eliminates subtlest innate afflictive obstructions.	First moment is marked by path of release directly realizing emptiness that attains cessation of subtlest innate obstructions. Trainees on this path are foe-destroyers (Arhats).

Practitioners who have reached one of the four results (result of stream enterer, etc.) are necessarily Aryas, for they have attained one of the three supramundane/Arya paths, i.e. the Hinayana path of seeing, meditation, or no-more-learning.

Next follows a presentation of the four results. Yet in order to comprehend these four, it is helpful to first take a closer look at the objects of elimination of the Hinayana path of seeing and the Hinayana path of meditation and of the means to overcome those:

As explained earlier, the obstructions that prevent practitioners from attaining the final Hinayana result of a foe-destroyer (i.e. self-liberation) are afflictive obstructions. Afflictive obstructions can be categorized into:

- a) Objects of elimination of the Hinayana path of seeing
- b) Objects of elimination of the Hinayana path of meditation

### ***Objects of elimination of the Hinayana path of seeing***

Objects of elimination of the Hinayana path of seeing refer to afflictive obstructions that are eliminated by their direct antidote, the uninterrupted path of the Hinayana path of seeing. These afflictive obstructions are in general described as *intellectually acquired* afflictive obstructions, i.e. intellectually acquired afflictions and their seeds.

### ***Objects of elimination of the Hinayana path of meditation***

Objects of elimination of the Hinayana path of meditation refer to afflictive obstructions that are eliminated by their direct antidote, the different uninterrupted paths of the Hinayana path of meditation. These afflictive obstructions are in general described as *innate* afflictive obstructions, i.e. innate afflictions and their seeds.

Innate afflictive obstructions are nine-fold (big-big, big-medium, big-small, etc. innate afflictive obstructions).

Since afflictive obstructions (which constitute afflictions *and* their seeds) are twofold, afflictions themselves are also twofold. Therefore there are:

- i. Afflictions that are the objects of elimination of the Hinayana path of seeing
- ii. Afflictions that are the objects of elimination of the Hinayana path of meditation

### ***Afflictions that are the objects of elimination of the Hinayana path of seeing***

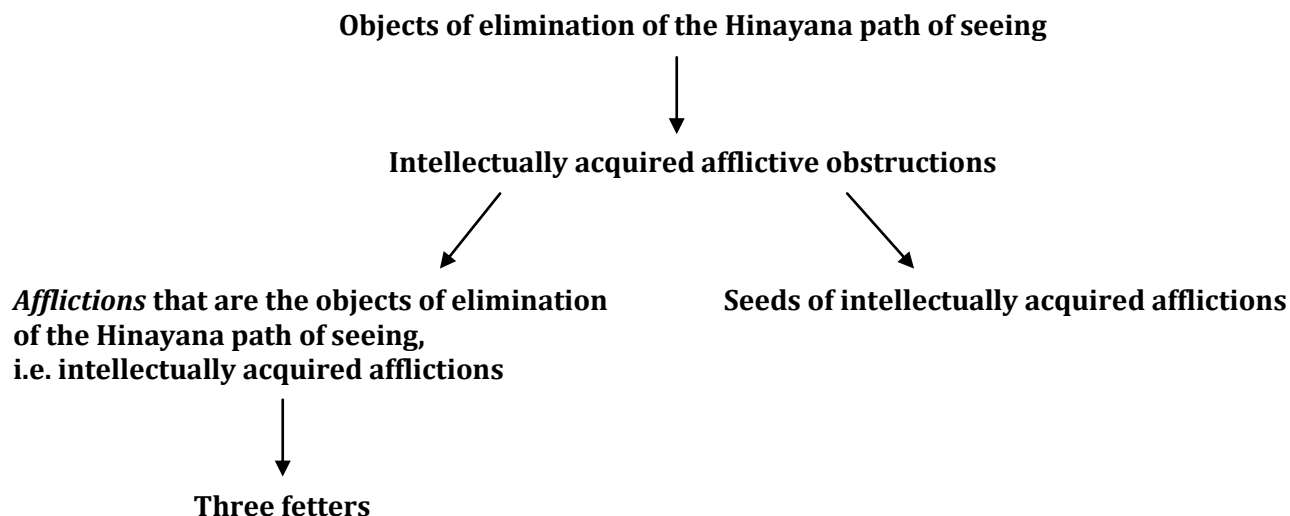
Afflictions that are the objects of elimination of the Hinayana path of seeing refer to *intellectually acquired* afflictions. However, the scriptures often summarize these afflictions into, what are called, the **three fetters** (*kun sbyor gsum* / pronounced: *kuen jor sum*) - or more precisely - the **three fetters that are the objects of elimination of the path of seeing** (*mthong spang kun sbyor gsum* / pronounced: *thong pang kuen jor sum*).

The **three fetters that are the objects of elimination of the path of seeing** are:

- i. *The intellectually acquired view of the transitory collection*: an intellectually acquired mental factor that perceives an inherently existent "I" or "mine".
- ii. *Belief in the supremacy of mistaken ethics and spiritual discipline*: a mental factor which holds that misguided ethics and religious practices are supreme and lead toward spiritual attainment. E.g. asserting that ritual animal sacrifices or ritual suicide lead to spiritual salvation.
- iii. *Afflictive doubt*: a mental factor that despite correct reasoning does not transform into a correctly assuming consciousness and that continues to waver with respect to the four noble truths, the law of cause and effect, the Three Jewels, and so forth. It is two-pointed and undermines the ability to engage in any action with confidence and resolve.

Even though the three fetters are not all-inclusive, since there are afflictions practitioners eradicate on the path of seeing that are none of the three, they are nonetheless considered representative of the objects of elimination of this path.

Therefore, many scriptures describe, for instance, a Hinayana Arya who abides on the path of release of the path of seeing as someone who has eliminated the three fetters that are the object of elimination of the path of seeing. With this it is implied that the Hinayana Arya has eradicated all intellectually acquired afflictions and hence also all intellectually acquired *afflictive obstructions*.



***Afflictions that are the objects of elimination of the Hinayana path of meditation***

Afflictions that are the objects of elimination of the Hinayana path of meditation refer to *innate* afflictions. Innate afflictions that are the objects of elimination of the path of meditation can be categorized into:

1. Innate afflictions that pertain to the Desire Realm
2. Innate afflictions that pertain to the Higher Realms (i.e. the form and formless realms)

These two categories can each be further categorized into mundane afflictions and supramundane afflictions.

Therefore innate afflictions that pertain to the Desire Realm are twofold:

- a) *Mundane* innate afflictions that pertain to the Desire Realm
- b) *Supramundane* innate afflictions that pertain to the Desire Realm

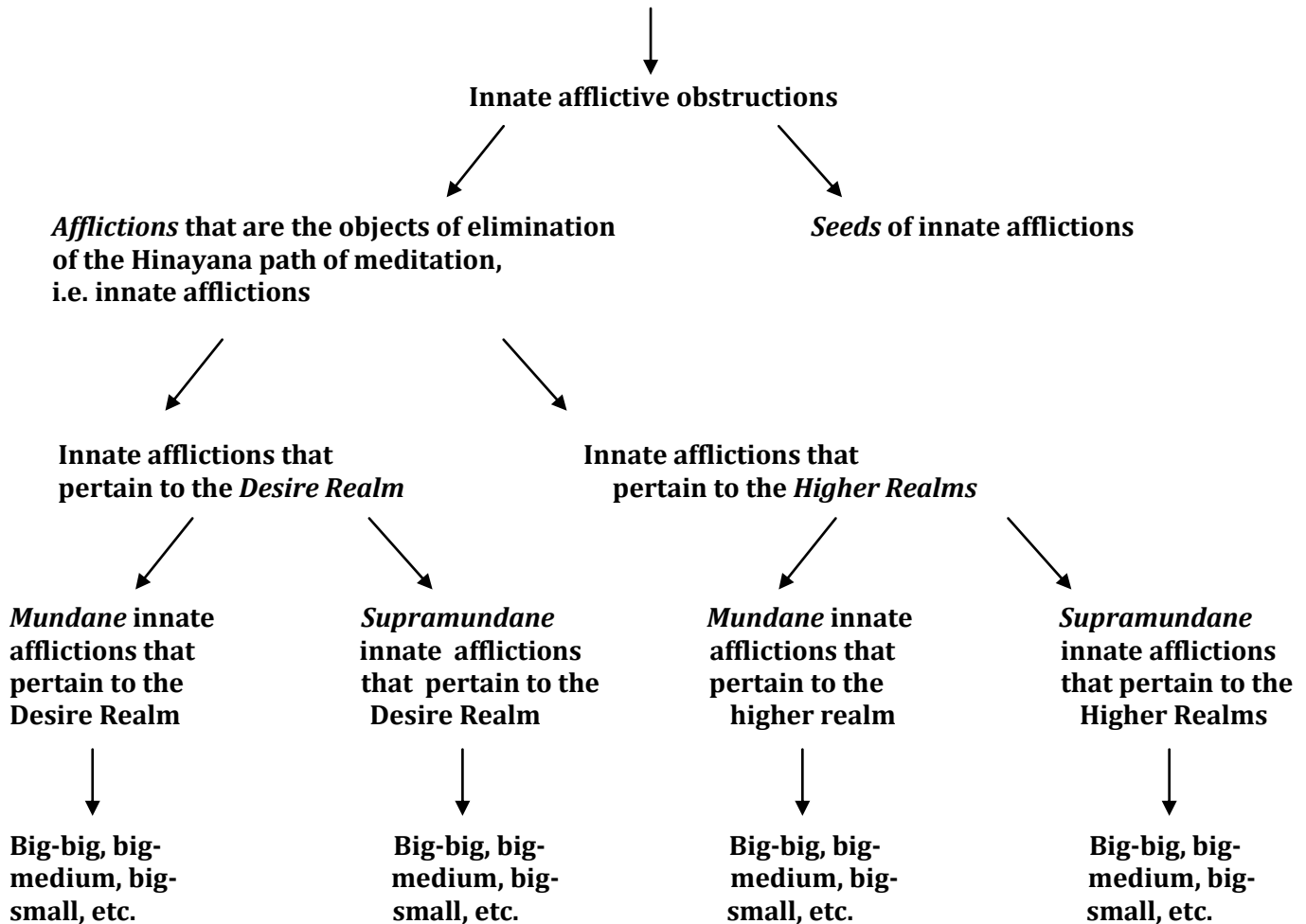
Likewise, innate afflictions that pertain to the Higher Realms are twofold:

- a) *Mundane* innate afflictions that pertain to the Higher Realms (i.e. the form and formless realms)
- b) *Supramundane* innate afflictions that pertain to the Higher Realms (i.e. the form and formless realms)

Mundane and supramundane innate afflictions that pertain to the Desire Realm, and mundane and supramundane innate afflictions that pertain to the Higher Realms are each nine-fold, for they can each be categorized into big-big, big-medium, big-small, and so forth, innate afflictions.

Please note that these extensive categories of afflictions that are objects of elimination of the path of meditation -though slightly confusing - are set forth in order to fully comprehend the descriptions of the four results of stream-enterer, once returner, and so forth.

## Objects of elimination of the Hinayana path of meditation



It is essential to understand that there are two ways to remove *mundane* innate afflictions: (1) they can be temporarily eliminated by mundane paths and (2) irrevocably eliminated by supramundane paths.

*Supramundane* innate afflictions, on the other hand, can *only* be irrevocably eliminated by supramundane paths; they cannot be temporarily eliminated by mundane paths.

In general, supramundane paths that irrevocably eliminate afflictions refer to uninterrupted paths on the path of seeing or the path of meditation, while supramundane paths that irrevocably eliminate *innate* afflictions refer only to uninterrupted paths on the path of meditation.

However, here mundane paths that temporarily eliminate *mundane* innate afflictions do not refer to paths of accumulation or preparation, but to the preparatory stages of one of the eight meditative absorptions. In order to understand the eight meditative absorptions, their preparatory stages, the temporary elimination of mundane innate afflictions, etc. the following explanation is essential:

### THE EIGHT MEDITATIVE ABSORPTIONS

The eight meditative absorptions are explained under the following headings:

- The three realms and nine levels
- Cultivation of the eight meditative absorptions
- Rebirth in one of the nine levels
- The reasons for cultivating meditative absorptions
- The objects of meditation

- The way in which mundane and supramundane uninterrupted paths remove innate afflictions

*The three realms and nine levels*

The Buddhist scriptures describe Samsara to consist of three realms (*kham s gsum*/pronounced: *kham sum*) and nine levels (*sa dgu*/pronounced: *sa gu*). The three realms are:

- i. The Desire Realm (constituting the six realms of hell, preta, animal, etc.)
- ii. The Form Realm
- iii. The Formless Realm

The nine levels of the three realms refer to the **Desire Realm**, the four levels of the **Form Realm**, and the four levels of the **Formless Realm**.

Thus, the nine levels are:

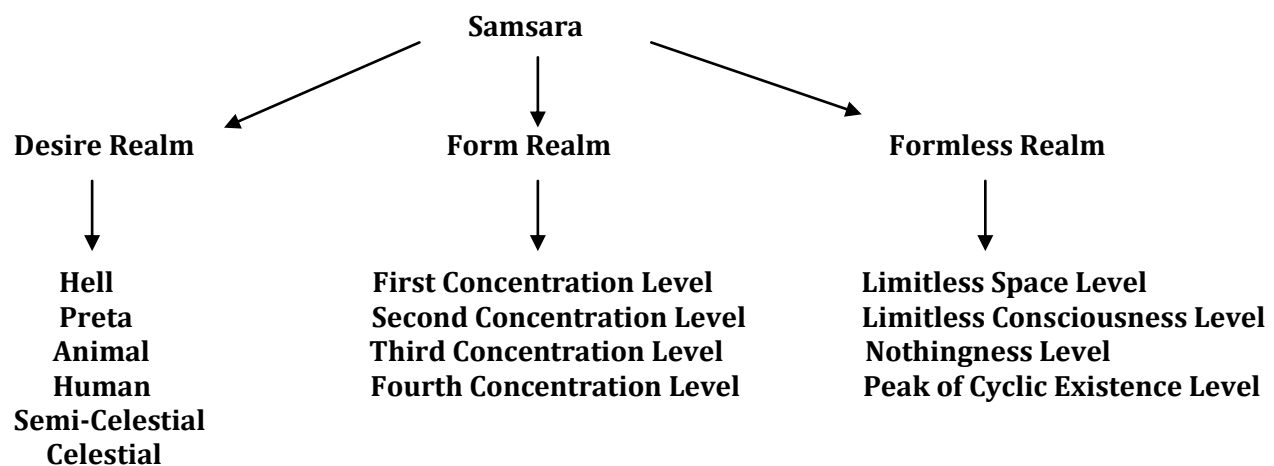
- (1) The **Desire Realm**

The four levels of the **Form Realm**:

- (2) The First Concentration Level/Abode
- (3) The Second Concentration Level/Abode
- (4) The Third Concentration Level/Abode
- (5) The Fourth Concentration Level/Abode

The four levels of the **Formless Realm**

- (6) Limitless Space Level/Abode
- (7) Limitless Consciousness Level/Abode
- (8) Nothingness Level/Abode
- (9) Peak of Cyclic Existence Level/Abode



The nine levels are states of existence within Samsara, and on each level different afflictions arise in the mental continua of those born there. The reason for this is that rebirth in one of the eight levels of the Form or Formless Realm is the result of increasingly subtle meditative absorptions, while sentient beings who have not cultivated any meditative absorption are born in the Desire Realm.

In general, there are eight meditative absorptions, with each corresponding to one of the eight levels of the Form or Formless Realms. These eight meditative absorptions are the product of intense meditation and are cultivated by both Buddhist *and* non-Buddhists. Therefore, it is important to understand that the following explanation is not unique to the Buddha Dharma but can also be found in non-Buddhist traditions.

The eight meditative absorptions consist of four concentrations and four formless absorptions. The four concentrations are simply known as 'first concentration', 'second concentration', 'third concentration', and 'fourth concentration', whereas each of the four formless absorptions has a particular name that

corresponds to its object of meditation. The first formless absorption is called 'limitless space', the second 'limitless consciousness', the third 'nothingness', and the fourth 'peak of cyclic existence' (even though they are sometimes also referred to as 'first formless absorption', 'second formless absorption', and so forth).

Each of the four concentrations causes rebirth in one of the four Form Realm Levels and each of the four formless absorptions causes rebirth in one of the four Formless Realms. This means that in order to be reborn in the First Form Realm Level (the First Concentration Level) one must have attained the first concentration, in order to take rebirth in the Second Form Realm Level (the Second Concentration Level) one must have attained the second concentration, and so forth. Likewise, in order to be reborn in the First Formless Realm Level (the Limitless Space Level) one must have attained the first formless absorption called 'limitless space', in order to be reborn in the Second Formless Realm Level (the Limitless Consciousness Level) one must have attained the second formless absorption called 'limitless consciousness', and so forth.

<i><b>Three Realms</b></i>	<i><b>Nine Levels</b></i>	<i><b>Eight Meditative Absorptions</b></i>
<b>1. Desire Realm</b>	<b>Desire Level/ Realm</b>	-----
<b>2. Form Realm</b>	<b>First Concentration Level/Abode</b>	<b>First concentration</b>
	<b>Second Concentration Level/Abode</b>	<b>Second concentration</b>
	<b>Third Concentration Level/Abode</b>	<b>Third concentration</b>
	<b>Fourth Concentration Level/Abode</b>	<b>Fourth concentration</b>
<b>3. Formless Realm</b>	<b>Limitless Space Level/Abode</b>	<b>Limitless space absorption/ First formless absorption</b>
	<b>Limitless Consciousness Level/Abode</b>	<b>Limitless consciousness absorption/ Second formless absorption</b>
	<b>Nothingness Level/Abode</b>	<b>Nothingness/ Third formless absorption</b>
	<b>Peak of Cyclic Existence Level/Abode</b>	<b>Peak of cyclic existence/ Fourth formless absorption</b>

#### *Cultivation of the eight meditative absorptions*

Of the eight meditative absorptions, it is easiest to attain the first concentration. Each subsequent meditative absorption is increasingly more difficult to attain, which means that the cultivation of the fourth formless absorption (peak of cyclic existence) is most difficult.

Furthermore, the cultivation of the meditative absorptions that are easier to attain must precede the cultivation of the meditative absorptions that are more difficult to attain. Therefore, the cultivation of the second concentration must be preceded by the cultivation of the first concentration, the cultivation of the third concentration must be preceded by the cultivation of the first and second concentration, the cultivation of the fourth concentration must be preceded by the cultivation of the first, second, and third concentration, the cultivation of the first formless absorption (limitless space) must be preceded by the cultivation of the four concentrations, and so forth.

Since the first concentration is easiest to attain meditators intend on cultivating meditative absorptions first set out to cultivate this meditative awareness. The first concentration is an extremely focused state of mind that is also able to engage in very effective analytical meditation.



It is preceded by a preparatory stage (*nyer bsdogs*, pronounced: *nyer dog*) that is responsible for the attainment of the first concentration. The first moment of the preparatory stage of the first concentration marks the first moment of calm abiding.

This means that a meditator who attains the first moment of calm abiding also attains the first moment of the preparatory stage of the first concentration, for that first moment of calm abiding is the first moment of the preparatory stage of the first concentration.

Likewise, the remaining meditative absorptions are also preceded by their respective preparatory stages.

<b><i>The meditative absorption that is newly attained</i></b>	<b><i>Meditative absorption(s) which are attained previous to the newly attained meditative absorption</i></b>	<b><i>The preparatory stage that precedes the newly attained meditative absorption and causes its attainment</i></b>
<b>First concentration</b>	.....	<b>The preparatory stage of the first concentration</b>
<b>Second concentration</b>	<b>The first concentration</b>	<b>The preparatory stage of the second concentration</b>
<b>Third concentration</b>	<b>The first and second concentrations</b>	<b>The preparatory stage of the third concentration</b>
<b>Fourth concentration</b>	<b>The first, second, and third concentrations</b>	<b>The preparatory stage of the fourth concentration</b>
<b>Limitless space</b>	<b>The first, second, third, and fourth concentrations</b>	<b>The preparatory stage of limitless space</b>
<b>Limitless consciousness</b>	<b>The four concentrations and limitless space</b>	<b>The preparatory stage of limitless consciousness</b>
<b>Nothingness</b>	<b>The four concentrations, limitless space, and limitless consciousness</b>	<b>The preparatory stage of nothingness</b>
<b>Peak of cyclic existence</b>	<b>The four concentrations, limitless space, limitless consciousness, and nothingness</b>	<b>The preparatory stage of the peak of cyclic existence</b>

The preparatory stage of the first concentration consists of further sub-stages (which will be explained in detail during one of the later topics of the *Ornament*). Those sub-stages are awarenesses that meditate on their particular objects of meditation while at the same time serve as 'mundane uninterrupted paths' with which meditators gradually and temporarily eliminate the nine types of *mundane* innate afflictions that pertain to the Desire Realm (big-big, medium-big, small-big, etc. mundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm). Please note that for such temporary elimination one does not have to enter a Buddhist path or even be a Buddhist.

The attainment of the temporary *cessation* of these nine types of afflictions marks the first moment of the first concentration itself. Thus, when meditators achieve the first concentration, mundane innate afflictions that pertain to the Desire Realm do not arise in their continua for as long as the first concentration does not degenerate. Yet since the mundane uninterrupted paths of the preparatory stage are not able to eliminate the *seeds* of the mundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm these afflictions arise again when the first

concentration degenerates (which is why the elimination is merely temporary). Examples for mundane innate afflictions that pertain to the Desire Realm are attachment to the sense objects of the Desire Realm anger, etc.

Anger is one of the coarsest afflictions; it is a mundane affliction, always non-virtuous, and necessarily pertains to the Desire Realm. Therefore, there is no anger that pertains to any of the Higher Realms, which means that a meditator

who has attained only the first concentration is unable to experience even the slightest resentment for as long as his meditative absorption does not degenerate. Attachment, on the other hand, does not necessarily pertain to the Desire Realm, for it possesses greater levels of subtlety and is not always non-virtuous. Therefore there is attachment that pertains to the Desire Realms, the First Concentration, the Second Concentration, and so forth.

However, a meditator, who attained the first concentration and temporarily removed the nine types of mundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm (big-big, big-medium, big-small, etc. mundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm), is still not free from the *supramundane* innate afflictions of the Desire Realm. An example for a supramundane innate affliction of the Desire Realm is the innate ignorance of the Desire Realm that perceives an inherently existent self.

Supramundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm can only be eliminated by cultivating Hinayana or Mahayana paths of meditation. However, supramundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm are not as coarse as mundane afflictions and therefore do not inhibit the meditator's first concentration. Furthermore, with the attainment of the first concentration and thus the temporary removal of mundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm, mundane and supramundane innate afflictions of the first concentration can manifest. These are more subtle than afflictions of the Desire Realm, and cannot arise *before* the attainment of the first concentration.

Having achieved the first concentration, meditators may then attempt to attain the second concentration. The ability of the second concentration to abide single-pointedly on one object is even greater than of the first concentration (and with every subsequent meditative absorption increases further). The second concentration is also preceded by a preparatory stage, the sub-stages of which consist of mundane uninterrupted paths that gradually and temporarily eliminate the nine types of the mundane innate afflictions that pertain to the *first concentration* (i.e. big-big, big-medium, big-small, etc. mundane innate afflictions of the *first concentration*). Therefore, meditators who train to attain the second concentration first gradually cultivate the different sub-stages of the preparatory stage of the second concentration, and with them gradually and temporarily eliminate the nine types of mundane innate afflictions of the first concentration. The first moment of the temporary *cessation* of these afflictions marks the first moment of the second concentration. This means that for as long as the second concentration does not degenerate, mundane innate afflictions of the first concentration cannot arise anymore. Nonetheless, *supramundane* innate afflictions of the Desire Realm and the first concentration as well as *mundane* and *supramundane* afflictions that pertain to the second concentration can arise. But since they are subtler and fewer in number than the afflictions that have been temporarily eliminated they do not inhibit the second concentration.

In this way, meditators may gradually cultivate the remaining meditative absorptions until they reach the 'peak of cyclic existence' which is an extremely absorbed and subtle mind. It is the highest mundane awareness one can attain within Samsara.

Regarding its cultivation, similar to the other meditative absorptions, the peak of cyclic existence absorption is also preceded by a preparatory stage the sub-stages of which temporarily eliminate the nine types (big-big, big-medium, big-small, etc.) mundane innate afflictions that pertain to the Nothingness Level. Once the temporary *cessation* of these afflictions is achieved the meditator attains the last of the eight absorptions. The afflictions that arise in the continuum of someone who attained such absorption are supramundane innate afflictions that pertain to the levels below the Peak of Cyclic Existence Level (the Desire Realm, First Concentration, etc. up until the Nothingness Level) as well as supramundane afflictions of the Peak of Cyclic Existence Level.

Please note that since there is no mundane uninterrupted path above the peak of cyclic existence the innate afflictions that pertain to the Peak of Cyclic Existence Level are all supramundane, for they cannot be temporarily eliminated by mundane paths but only irrevocably eliminated by Hinayana or Mahayana paths of meditation.

In brief, with the attainment of each of the absorptions, a meditator temporarily overcomes mundane innate afflictions that pertain to any of the levels *below* the respective absorptions, while only *supramundane* afflictions of those lower levels remain.

Also, corresponding to the highest meditative absorption the meditator has attained, *mundane* and *supramundane* afflictions that pertain to the level of that absorption can arise in his continuum (the only exception is the peak of cyclic existence since the afflictions that pertain to its level are necessarily supramundane), while mundane and supramundane innate afflictions that pertain to a higher absorption cannot manifest. For instance, if the highest absorption the meditator attained is the third concentration, mundane and supramundane innate afflictions of the Third Concentration as well as supramundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm, First Concentration, and Second Concentration arise. Yet neither mundane and supramundane innate afflictions of any of the levels *above* the Third Concentration nor mundane innate afflictions of any of the levels *below* the Third Concentration manifest in his continuum.

Likewise if the highest absorption the meditator attained is the nothingness absorption, mundane and supramundane afflictions of the Nothingness Level as well as supramundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm, the four Form Realm Levels, and the first two Formless Realm Levels arise. But neither mundane and supramundane innate afflictions of the Peak of Cyclic Existence Level nor mundane innate afflictions that pertain to any of the levels below the Nothingness Level manifest in his continuum. [See Chart 2]

#### *Rebirth in one of the nine levels*

Regarding rebirth in one of the nine levels, someone who has not attained any concentration can only be reborn in the Desire Realm. A meditator other than an Arya Bodhisattva who has attained only the first concentration (but not the second) in *this* life is necessarily reborn in the First Concentration Level in his *next* life (unless the concentration degenerates before he dies). Hence the meditator who has attained only the first concentration is either a person of the Desire Realm or a person of the First Concentration Level because in this life he is a person of the Desire Realm and in his next life he is reborn in the First Concentration Level.

If a meditator other than an Arya Bodhisattva has attained the second concentration (but not the third), he is either a person of the Desire Realm, the First Concentration, or the Second Concentration Level. Then when he dies (and if the second concentration has not degenerated) he is necessarily reborn in the Second Concentration Level.

Similarly, if a meditator other than an Arya Bodhisattva has attained the third concentration (but not the fourth concentration), he is either a person of the Desire Realm, the First Concentration, Second Concentration, or Third Concentration Level, and when he dies (without the third concentration having degenerated) he is necessarily reborn in the Third Concentration Level.

The same applies to the fourth concentration and the four formless absorptions.

The reason for this is that one of the eight meditative absorptions can be attained newly only by a person in any of the levels that is *below* the respective absorption. Therefore, the first concentration can be attained newly only by someone in the Desire Realm and not by a person who resides in the First Concentration Level. The second concentration can be attained newly only by a person in the Desire Realm or the First Concentration Level but not by someone in the Second Concentration Level, and so forth.

Yet please note that although a meditator other than an Arya Bodhisattva who has attained, for instance, the second concentration must have also attained the first concentration, he is not reborn in the Desire Realm or the First Concentration Level because he has attained the higher and superior second concentration.

Similarly, even though a meditator other than an Arya Bodhisattva who has attained the third concentration

must have also attained the first and the second concentrations, he is not reborn in the Desire Realm, the First Concentration or the Second Concentration Abode because he has attained the higher and superior third concentration. The same applies to the other concentrations as well as the four formless absorptions.

In some of the above explanations the phrase 'meditator other than a Arya Bodhisattva' is used because even though Bodhisattvas who have reached the path of seeing have necessarily attained the four concentrations, they are able to choose their rebirths within Samsara and thus are reborn in whichever level is most beneficial to sentient beings. This means that they either take rebirth in the Desire Realm or any of the four Concentration Levels.

However, even though Arya Bodhisattvas may have cultivated the formless absorptions they are not born in any of the Formless Realm Levels since they are unable to benefit sentient beings in those states.

<i><b>The meditative absorption that is newly attained</b></i>	<i><b>The level in which the newly attained meditative absorption was cultivated</b></i>	<i><b>The level in which a meditator (other than an Arya Bodhisattva) is reborn in if his newly attained meditative absorption does not degenerate and if he does not cultivate a higher absorption</b></i>
<b>First concentration</b>	<b>The Desire Realm</b>	<b>The First Concentration Level</b>
<b>Second concentration</b>	<b>The Desire Realm or First Concentration Level</b>	<b>The Second Concentration Level</b>
<b>Third concentration</b>	<b>The Desire Realm, First or Second Concentration Level</b>	<b>The Third Concentration Level</b>
<b>Fourth concentration</b>	<b>The Desire Realm, First, Second, or Third Concentration Level</b>	<b>The Fourth Concentration Level</b>
<b>Limitless space</b>	<b>The Desire Realm or one of the four Formless Realm Levels</b>	<b>The Limitless Space Level</b>
<b>Limitless consciousness</b>	<b>The Desire Realm, one of the four Formless Realm Levels or the Limitless Space Level</b>	<b>The Limitless Consciousness Level</b>
<b>Nothingness</b>	<b>The Desire Realm, one of the four Form Realm Levels, the Limitless Space Level or Nothingness Level</b>	<b>The Nothingness Level</b>
<b>Peak of cyclic existence</b>	<b>The Desire Realm, one of the four Form Realm Levels, or one of the first three Formless Realm Levels</b>	<b>The Peak of Cyclic Existence Level</b>

*The reasons for cultivating meditative absorptions*

The reasons for developing any of the meditative absorptions differ for Buddhists and non-Buddhists. Many followers of non-Buddhist traditions believe the different levels of the form and formless realms to be states of liberation.

Some non-Buddhists may for instance assert that the First Concentration Level is a state of liberation and therefore cultivate the first meditative absorption in order to be reborn in its corresponding level. Or they may assert that one of the formless levels, for instance, the Nothingness Level is a state of liberation, and thus cultivate the nothingness absorption and the meditative absorptions that precede the nothingness absorption, in order to be reborn in the Nothingness Level. Others may regard the Peak of Cyclic Existence Level to be a state of liberation, cultivate the four absorptions of the Form Realm and the four absorptions of the Formless Realm and take rebirth there.

As its name suggests the Peak of Cyclic Existence Level is the highest level of existence within Samsara, and unless one attains liberation, one cannot transcend that level. Yet, due to afflictions and karmic imprints meditators are not able stay in that level forever. Instead at some point their absorptions will degenerate and they are reborn in lower levels.

Unlike non-Buddhists, Buddhist practitioners accept the eight levels of the Form and Formless Realms to be within Samsara and therefore to be in the nature of suffering. Nonetheless if Buddhist practitioners have not generated renunciation they may still cultivate the different meditative absorptions out of attachment to rebirth in one of the eight levels of the Form and Formless Realms. Buddhist trainees who have attained renunciation, on the other hand, cultivate the different meditative absorptions in order to take rebirth in one of the eight levels not out of attachment but if it is conducive for their practice and - particularly in the case of Arya Bodhisattvas - if it enables them to benefit sentient beings.

Furthermore, Hinayana and Mahayana practitioners develop the meditative absorptions to serve as mental bases for supramundane uninterrupted paths, paths of release, and so forth, since the absorptions are more stable and have greater focus. Awarenesses of the Desire Realm are too coarse and scattered to serve as mental bases of particularly those meditative equipoise paths (as explained earlier supramundane uninterrupted paths and paths of release are meditative equipoise paths that directly realize emptiness).

Regarding Hinayana paths, the first concentration serves as the mental base of meditative equipoise paths in the continua of Hinayana Aryas who have attained only the first concentration. This means that supramundane uninterrupted paths and paths of release in the continua of such Aryas are first concentrations. Likewise, the second concentration serves as the mental base of meditative equipoise paths in the continua of Hinayana Aryas who have attained only the first and second concentrations. The third concentration serves as the mental base of meditative equipoise paths in the continua of Hinayana Aryas who have attained the first, second, and third concentrations, and so forth. In the case of Hinayana Aryas who have attained all eight meditative absorptions, it is necessarily the nothingness absorption that serves as the mental base of supramundane uninterrupted paths and paths of release. The reason for this is that the peak of cyclic existence absorption is so subtle that it lacks the necessary clarity that enables Hinayana Aryas to utilize it as the mental base of the meditative equipoise paths that directly realize emptiness. Hence in the continua of Hinayana Aryas there are no meditative equipoise paths that are peak of cyclic existence absorptions.

As will be explained below, there are also Hinayana Aryas who have not attained any of the eight meditative absorptions. Yet all Hinayana Aryas have attained the union of calm abiding and special insight, and such union in the continuum of someone who has not attained any of the meditative absorptions is necessarily a *preparatory stage* of the first concentration. Therefore, in the case of Hinayana Aryas who have not attained any of the eight meditative absorptions, the preparatory stage of the first concentrations serves as the mental base of supramundane uninterrupted paths, paths of release, and so forth.

Regarding Mahayana paths, as mentioned earlier, Arya Bodhisattvas have necessarily attained the fourth concentration while they have not necessarily cultivated any of the formless absorptions. Yet, even if Arya Bodhisattvas have attained any of the formless absorptions, the mental base of the uninterrupted path and the path of release of their Mahayana path of seeing must be a fourth concentration. The reason for this is that the uninterrupted path and path of release of the Mahayana path of seeing are the first meditative equipoise paths Bodhisattvas generate and thus lack the ability to directly realize emptiness with any of the

formless absorptions (which are less clear than the concentrations). However, due to familiarity with the direct realization of emptiness Bodhisattvas on the Mahayana path of meditation can utilize whichever is the highest meditative absorption they have cultivated - even the peak of cyclic existence absorption - to serve as the mental base of meditative equipoise paths.

Reason for non-Buddhists to cultivate any of the eight meditative absorptions	Reason for Hinayana practitioners to cultivate any of the eight meditative absorptions	Reason for Mahayana practitioners to cultivate any of the eight meditative absorptions
To be reborn in one of the eight levels of the Form and Formless Realms, which they assert to be states of liberation.	To serve as mental bases of their paths, and in order to take rebirth in one of the levels of the Form and Formless Realms if it is conducive for their practice	To serve as mental bases of their paths, and in order to take rebirth in one of the levels of the Form Realms in order to benefit sentient beings

### *The objects of meditation*

It is important to understand that the attainment of any of the eight meditative absorptions depends on their respective preparatory stages since the mundane uninterrupted paths of the preparatory stages temporarily eliminate the mundane innate afflictions that prevent the different absorptions from manifesting. Thus, the question that arises is, 'what is the object of meditation of these preparatory stages?' The object of meditation mundane preparatory stages focus on is called "bearer of the aspects of coarseness and peace" (*zhi rags kyi rnam pa can*, pronounced: *zhi rag kyi nam pa chaen*). **Non-Buddhists and Buddhists who lack renunciation and aspire to be born** in the first concentration, for example, cultivate and meditate on an awareness that bears the aspect of coarseness with regard to the Desire Realm and the aspect of peace with regard to the First Concentration Level. In other words, they cultivate a meditative awareness which regards the Desire Realm to be coarse and faulty and the First Concentration Level to be a state of peace. The intense focus on these aspects of peace and coarseness then enables the preparatory stages that pertain to the First Concentration to temporarily eliminate the nine types of mundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm (in particular attachment to the Desire Realm), and to attain the first concentration.

Similarly, non-Buddhists who have attained the first concentration and now aspire to be born in the Second Concentration Level cultivate and meditate on an awareness that possesses the aspect of coarseness with regard to the First Concentration Level and the aspect of peace with regard to the Second Concentration Level. Hence their meditative awareness regards the First Concentration Level to be coarse and faulty and the Second Concentration Level to be a state of peace. By intensely focusing on these two aspects of peace and coarseness the preparatory stages of the Second Concentration develops the ability to temporarily eliminate the nine types of mundane innate afflictions of the first concentration and thereby to attain the second concentration.

The same applies to the remaining concentrations of the Form Realm and the four absorptions of the Formless Realm.

Buddhist practitioners who possess any of the meditative absorptions may *previous* to engaging in Buddhist practice have been non-Buddhist practitioners and hence may have cultivated any of the absorptions in dependence on the earlier described non-Buddhist technique of generating the meditative awareness of the preparatory stage that perceives the lower level to be coarse and the higher level to be a state of peace.

However, if they cultivated any of the meditative absorptions in dependence on Buddhist training - in particular those who are on the Hinayana or Mahayana path - there are two methods of cultivating such absorptions and therefore of eliminating the innate afflictions that pertain to the different levels:

- (1) Cultivating any of the meditative absorptions in reliance on *mundane* uninterrupted paths
- (2) Cultivating any of the meditative absorptions in reliance on *supramundane* uninterrupted paths

### **(1) Cultivating any of the meditative absorptions in reliance on mundane uninterrupted paths:**

Buddhist practitioners who have renunciation and who train in the attainment of, for instance, the first concentration, first cultivate the mundane preparatory stage of the first concentration. The object of



meditation of the uninterrupted paths of that preparatory stage is also called "bearer of the aspects of coarseness and peace". Yet, it does not focus on the lower level (i.e. the Desire Realm) to be coarse and the higher level (i.e. the First Concentration Level) to be a state of peace but on the truths of suffering and the truths of origin (the former two of the four noble truths) to be coarse and the truths of cessation and the truths of the path (the latter two of the four noble truths) to be states of peace. The same applies to the preparatory stages of the remaining three concentrations and the four formless absorptions; they all focus on the former two truths to be coarse and the latter two to be states of peace in order to temporarily remove whichever mundane innate afflictions prevent the arising of their respective absorptions.

**(2) Cultivating any of the meditative absorptions in reliance on supramundane uninterrupted paths:**

In the case of cultivating meditative absorptions in reliance on *supramundane* uninterrupted paths, such supramundane paths are uninterrupted paths of meditation that directly realize emptiness and gradually and irrevocably eliminate whichever mundane innate afflictions prevent the arising of any of the meditative absorptions. This will be explained in more detail below.

Meditative absorption that is to be attained	NON-BUDDHISTS and BUDDHISTS who lack renunciation	BUDDHISTS who attained renunciation	
	Object of meditation of the <i>mundane</i> uninterrupted paths that cause the attainment of the meditative absorption	Object of meditation of the <i>mundane</i> uninterrupted paths that cause the attainment of the meditative absorption	Object of meditation of the <i>supramundane</i> uninterrupted paths that cause the attainment of the meditative absorption
<b>First concentration</b>	The Desire Realm is coarse and the First Concentration Level peace	The former two truths are coarse and the latter two truths peace	Emptiness (lack of true existence)
<b>Second concentration</b>	The First Concentration Level is coarse and the Second Concentration Level peace	The former two truths are coarse and the latter two truths peace	Emptiness
<b>Third concentration</b>	The Second Concentration Level is coarse and the Third Concentration Level peace	The former two truths are coarse and the latter two truths peace	Emptiness
<b>Fourth concentration</b>	The Third Concentration Level is coarse and the Fourth Concentration Level peace	The former two truths are coarse and the latter two truths peace	Emptiness
<b>Limitless Space</b>	The Fourth Concentration Level is coarse and the Limitless Space Level peace	The former two truths are coarse and the latter two truths peace	Emptiness
<b>Limitless consciousness</b>	The Limitless Space Level is coarse and the Limitless Consciousness Level peace	The former two truths are coarse and the latter two truths peace	Emptiness
<b>Nothingness</b>	The Limitless Consciousness Level is coarse and the Nothingness Level peace	The former two truths are coarse and the latter two truths peace	Emptiness
<b>Peak of cyclic existence</b>	The Nothingness Level is coarse and the Peak of Cyclic Existence Level peace	The former two truths are coarse and the latter two truths peace	Emptiness

Having gained some understanding of the different meditative absorptions, their cultivation, and so on, it is essential to understand how mundane uninterrupted paths and supramundane uninterrupted paths differ in the way they eliminate innate afflictions.

*The way in which mundane and supramundane paths eliminate innate afflictions*

As explained above, mundane uninterrupted paths (in the continua of both Buddhists and non-Buddhists) eliminate innate afflictions only *temporarily*, and of the two, mundane and supramundane innate afflictions, they are unable to temporarily eliminate *supramundane* ones. They can temporarily eliminate only *mundane* innate afflictions.

Furthermore, for instance, the different mundane uninterrupted paths of the preparatory stage of the First Concentration gradually and temporarily remove only the nine types of mundane innate afflictions that pertain to the *Desire Realm*; they are unable to temporarily remove the nine types of mundane innate afflictions that pertain to any higher level such as the First Concentration Level, the Second Concentration Level, etc.

Likewise, the mundane uninterrupted paths of the preparatory stage of the second concentration gradually and temporarily eliminate only the nine types of mundane innate afflictions that pertain to the *First Concentration Level*. They do not temporarily remove the nine types of mundane innate afflictions that pertain to the Desire Realm since they have already been temporarily removed by the preceding uninterrupted paths of the preparatory stage of the First Concentration. Also, they are unable to temporarily remove any mundane innate afflictions that pertain to the Third Concentration, Fourth Concentration, and so forth.

The same applies to the remaining concentrations and the four formless absorptions.

[See Charts 4 and 6]

Supramundane uninterrupted paths, on the other hand, are meditative equipoise paths that directly realize emptiness. Therefore, they are more potent than *mundane* uninterrupted paths. In general, there are two types of supramundane uninterrupted paths: (1) supramundane uninterrupted paths of the path of seeing and (2) supramundane uninterrupted paths of the path of meditation.

As explained earlier, supramundane uninterrupted paths of the path of seeing eliminate intellectually acquired afflictions, whereas supramundane uninterrupted paths of the path of meditation eliminate innate afflictions. Yet unlike mundane uninterrupted paths, they eliminate their respective afflictions *irrevocably*, for they remove them together with their seeds. Also, they irrevocably eliminate both mundane and supramundane afflictions.

Innate afflictions can be categorized into 81 different types. The 81 types constitute nine types of innate afflictions that pertain to each of the nine levels. Thus, there are nine types of innate afflictions that pertain to the Desire Realm (i.e. big-big, medium-big, medium-small, etc. innate afflictions of the Desire Realm), nine types of innate afflictions that pertain to the First Concentration Level (i.e. big-big, medium-big, medium-small, etc. innate afflictions of the First Concentration Level), nine types of innate afflictions that pertain to the Second Concentration (i.e. big-big, medium-big, medium-small, etc. innate afflictions of the Second Concentration Level), and so forth. [See Chart 3]

These 81 types of innate afflictions can each be further subdivided into mundane and supramundane innate afflictions.

Regarding the 81 types of *supramundane* innate afflictions, there is a definite sequence in which supramundane uninterrupted paths of the path of meditation eliminate these afflictions. First big-big supramundane innate afflictions that pertain to each of the nine levels, i.e. the first type of supramundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm, the First Concentration, Second Concentration, etc. are eliminated simultaneously. Thereafter medium-big (the second type of) supramundane innate afflictions of each of the nine levels are eliminated simultaneously, then the third (small-big) of supramundane innate afflictions of each of the nine levels are eliminated simultaneously, and so forth.

Therefore, as explained earlier (see Handout 24, page 1) supramundane uninterrupted paths of the path of meditation are nine-fold:



1. **Small-small** supramundane uninterrupted path of the path of meditation
2. **Medium-small** supramundane uninterrupted path of the path of meditation
3. **Big-small** " " " "
4. **Small-medium** " " " "
5. **Medium-medium** " " " "
6. **Big-medium** " " " "
7. **Small-big** " " " "
8. **Medium-big** " " " "
9. **Big-big**

1. The **small-small** supramundane uninterrupted path eliminates **big-big** (the first type of) supramundane innate afflictions of each of the nine levels (i.e. big-big supramundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm, big-big supramundane innate afflictions of the First Concentration Level, big-big supramundane innate afflictions of the Second Concentration Level, and so forth)
2. The **medium-small** supramundane uninterrupted path eliminates **medium-big** (the second type of) supramundane innate afflictions of each of the nine levels (i.e. medium-big supramundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm, medium-big supramundane innate afflictions of the First Concentration, medium-big supramundane innate afflictions of the Second Concentration, and so forth)
3. The **big-small** supramundane uninterrupted path eliminates **small-big** supramundane innate afflictions of each of the nine levels (i.e. small-big supramundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm, small-big supramundane innate afflictions of the First Concentration, small-big supramundane innate afflictions of the Second Concentration, and so forth)
4. The **small-medium** supramundane uninterrupted path eliminates **big-medium** supramundane innate afflictions of each of the nine levels (i.e. big-medium supramundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm, big-medium supramundane innate afflictions of the First Concentration, big-medium supramundane innate afflictions of the Second Concentration, and so forth)
5. The **medium-medium** supramundane uninterrupted path eliminates **medium-medium** supramundane innate afflictions of each of the nine levels (i.e. medium-medium supramundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm, medium-medium supramundane innate afflictions of the First Concentration, medium-medium supramundane innate afflictions of the Second Concentration, and so forth)
6. The **big-medium** supramundane uninterrupted path eliminates **small-medium** supramundane innate afflictions of each of the nine levels (i.e. small-medium supramundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm, small-medium supramundane innate afflictions of the First Concentration, small-medium supramundane innate afflictions of the Second Concentration, and so forth)
7. The **small-big** supramundane uninterrupted path eliminates **big-small** supramundane innate afflictions of each of the nine levels (i.e. big-small supramundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm, big-small supramundane innate afflictions of the First Concentration, big-small supramundane innate afflictions of the Second Concentration, and so forth)
8. The **medium-big** supramundane uninterrupted path eliminates **medium-small** supramundane innate afflictions of each of the nine levels (i.e. medium-small supramundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm, medium-small supramundane innate afflictions of the First Concentration, medium-small supramundane innate afflictions of the Second Concentration, and so forth)
9. The **big-big** supramundane uninterrupted path eliminates **small-small** supramundane innate afflictions of each of the nine levels (i.e. small-small supramundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm, small-small supramundane innate afflictions of the First Concentration, small-small supramundane innate afflictions of the Second Concentration, and so forth) [See Charts 5 and 7]

Regarding the 81 types of *mundane* innate afflictions, there is no definite sequence in which supramundane uninterrupted paths of the path of meditation eliminate these mundane afflictions. This means that even though mundane innate afflictions that pertain to any of the nine levels have to be irrevocably eliminated at the latest by the uninterrupted path of the path of meditation that irrevocably eliminates their

supramundane counterparts these mundane innate afflictions can also be irrevocably removed by any of the preceding uninterrupted paths of the path of meditation. For instance, **medium-big** (the second type of) mundane innate afflictions of any of the nine levels are irrevocably removed at the latest by their direct antidote, the **medium-small** (the second type of the) uninterrupted path of the path of meditation (which necessarily eliminates **medium-big** *supramundane* innate afflictions). Yet it is also possible that these mundane innate afflictions are irrevocably eliminated by the preceding **small-small** (the first type of the) uninterrupted path of the path of meditation. In other words, uninterrupted paths that can serve as the direct antidote to **medium-big** (the second type of) mundane innate afflictions are the **small-small** (first type of the) uninterrupted path and the **medium-small** (second type of the) uninterrupted path of the path of meditation, of which the latter definitely eliminates those mundane afflictions if they are not already eliminated by the former uninterrupted path.

Likewise, **small-big** (the third type of) mundane innate afflictions of any of the nine levels are irrevocably removed at the latest by their direct antidote, the **big-small** (the third type of the) uninterrupted path of the path of meditation (which necessarily eliminates **small-big** *supramundane* innate afflictions). But it is also possible that these mundane innate afflictions are irrevocably eliminated by the preceding **small-small** (the first type) or **medium-small** (the second type of) uninterrupted paths of the path of meditation. This means that uninterrupted paths that can serve as the direct antidote to the **small-big** (the third type of) mundane innate afflictions of any of the nine levels are the **small-small** (first type of the) uninterrupted path, the **medium-small** (second type of the) uninterrupted path, and the **big-small** (third type of the) uninterrupted path, of which the latter definitely eliminates those mundane afflictions if they are not already eliminated by one of the two former uninterrupted paths.

The same applies to the remaining seven types of mundane innate afflictions. Yet with the increasing subtlety of these mundane afflictions there are also increasingly more uninterrupted paths that can serve as their direct antidotes. Therefore, even though the **small-small** (the ninth type of) mundane innate afflictions of any of the nine levels are irrevocably removed at the latest by their direct antidote, the **big-big** (ninth type of the) uninterrupted path of the path of meditation, it is also possible that they are irrevocably removed by any of the preceding uninterrupted paths of the paths of meditation (namely the **small-small**, **medium-small**, **big-small**, **small-medium**, **medium-medium**, **big-medium**, **small-big**, or **medium-big** uninterrupted path of the path of meditation).

The only exception are the **big-big** (the first type of) mundane innate afflictions of any of the nine levels. They are necessarily irrevocably removed by the **small-small** (first type of the) uninterrupted path (which also irrevocably eliminates **big-big** *supramundane* innate afflictions) because there are no preceding uninterrupted paths of the path of meditation. [See Charts 5 and 8]

This completes the explanation of the way in which mundane and supramundane uninterrupted paths eliminate innate afflictions.

Next is a presentation of the four results.

### The four results

Panchen Sonam Drakpa explains in his *General Meaning*:

"The reason for positing four results of the method of trainees-in-virtue is that the main obstacles that prevent the attainment of the result of the ultimate trainees-in-virtue, foe-destroyers, are afflictive obstructions. Of the two kinds of afflictive obstructions - (1) afflictions that are objects of elimination of the path of seeing and (2) afflictions that are the objects of elimination of the path of meditation - the result of stream-enterer is postulated from the perspective of having eliminated the first kind (afflictions that are the objects of elimination of the path of seeing, i.e. intellectually acquired afflictions/the three fetters). Of the two kinds of afflictions that are the objects of elimination of the path of meditation - (1) afflictions of the Desire Realm that are the objects of elimination of the path of meditation, and (2) afflictions of the Higher Realms that are the objects of elimination of the path of meditation - the result of once-returner is postulated from the perspective of having eliminated the majority of the first kind

(i.e. big-big, medium-big, small-big, big-medium, medium-medium, and small medium/the first six of the nine types of mundane afflictions of the Desire Realm that are the objects of elimination of the path of meditation). The result of never-returned is postulated from the perspective of having eliminated all of the first kind (i.e. the nine types of mundane afflictions of the Desire Realm that are the objects of elimination of the path of meditation). And the result of foe-destroyer is postulated from the perspective of having eliminated afflictions of the Higher Realm that are the objects of elimination of the path of meditation.

The reason for not subdividing the afflictions of the Higher Realm that are the objects of elimination of the path of meditation, while subdividing the afflictions of the Desire Realm that are objects of elimination of the path of meditation is that in comparison with the afflictions of the Higher Realms afflictions of the Desire Realm are greater in number and possess greater flaws. Hence the result of once-returned is postulated from the perspective of having eliminated the majority of [mundane] afflictions of the Desire Realm that are objects of elimination of the path of meditation, whereas the result of never-returned is postulated from the perspective of having eliminated all [mundane] afflictions of the Desire Realm that are objects of elimination of the path of meditation."

At the beginning of his explanation Panchen Sonam Drakpa speaks of 'the four results of the method of trainees-in-virtue'. Here *methods of trainees-in-virtue* (*dge shbyong gi tshul*/pronounced: *ge jong gi tsuel/dge shbyong* = trainee in virtue, virtuous training, virtuous endeavor, gi = genitive, tshul = method, manner) refer to uninterrupted paths. Uninterrupted paths are methods of trainees-in-virtue because they are methods or means that lead to the ultimate trainees-in-virtue: foe-destroyers. In general, *results* of uninterrupted paths are twofold: (1) cessations and (2) paths of release.

Cessations (which are obtained in dependence on uninterrupted paths) are results of uninterrupted paths because they are nominal results of methods of uninterrupted paths. In other words, even though cessations are not results because they are not impermanent they are *nominal* results of uninterrupted paths because they are obtained in dependence on such paths.

Paths of release are also results of uninterrupted paths because they are uninterrupted paths' results by way of being in concordance with their causes. Paths of release are in concordance with their causes - uninterrupted paths - because like uninterrupted paths they directly realize emptiness.

In short, uninterrupted paths, such as uninterrupted paths of the path of seeing or *Uninterrupted Paths at the End of the Continuum* are methods of trainees-in-virtue, while cessations and paths of release are results of those uninterrupted paths.

This explanation is according to Asanga's *Abhidharmasamucchaya*

The results of methods of trainees-in-virtue (i.e. the results of cessations and paths of release) can also be categorized into four results:

- 1) Result of stream-enterer
- 2) Result of once returner
- 3) Result of never- returner
- 4) Result of foe-destroyer

### **Result of stream-enterer**

The result of stream-enterer is attained when Hinayana Aryas achieve the irrevocable cessation of the three fetters (i.e. intellectually acquired afflictive obstructions / the objects of elimination of the Hinayana path of seeing) without having, previous to reaching the Hinayana path of seeing, temporarily eliminated the sixth type of *mundane* innate afflictions that pertain to the Desire Realm (i.e. small-medium *mundane* innate afflictions that pertain to the Desire Realm). Therefore, Hinayana Aryas newly become stream enterers the moment they attain the irrevocable elimination of intellectually acquired afflictive obstructions without, previous to attaining the Hinayana path of seeing, having temporarily eliminated the sixth type of *mundane* innate afflictions that pertain to the Desire Realm. They remain stream enterers for as long as they do not attain any of the higher results, such as the result of once-returner.

Thus, the characteristics of stream-enterers are:

- (1) They are Hinayana Aryas
- (2) They did not temporarily eliminate the sixth type of mundane innate afflictions *before* they reached the Hinayana path of seeing
- (3) While on the Hinayana path of seeing they irrevocably eliminated the three fetters (i.e. intellectually acquired afflictive obstructions)
- (4) They have not attained any of the higher results, such as the result of once-returner.

### **Result of once-returner**

The result of once-returner is attained when Hinayana Aryas, who previous to reaching the path of seeing did not temporarily eliminate the ninth (small-small) type of mundane innate afflictions, achieve both the irrevocable cessation of intellectually acquired afflictive obstructions *and* the temporary or irrevocable cessation of the sixth (small-medium) type of *mundane* innate afflictions that pertain to the Desire Realm *before* attaining the irrevocable cessation of the sixth type of *supramundane* innate afflictions of the Desire Realm. Thus, Hinayana Aryas newly become once-returners the moment they attain both the irrevocable cessation of intellectually acquired afflictive obstructions *and* the temporary or irrevocable cessation of the sixth type of *mundane* innate afflictions of the Desire Realm without at that moment also attaining the irrevocable cessation of the sixth type of *supramundane* innate afflictions of the Desire Realm and without, previous to entering the Hinayana path of seeing having eliminated the ninth type of mundane innate afflictions. And they remain once-returners for as long as they do not attain the result of never-returner. In short, the characteristics of once-returners are:

- (1) They are Hinayana Aryas
- (2) They did not temporarily eliminate the ninth type of mundane innate afflictions *before* reaching the path of seeing
- (3) While on the path of seeing they irrevocably eliminated the three fetters (i.e. intellectually acquired afflictive obstructions)
- (4) They temporarily or irrevocably eliminated the sixth type of mundane innate afflictions *before* irrevocably eliminating the sixth type of *supramundane* innate afflictions
- (5) They have not attained the result of never-returner

Therefore, once-returners are characterized by eliminating the sixth type of *mundane* innate afflictions of the Desire Realm and the sixth type of *supramundane* innate afflictions of the Desire Realm sequentially. But even when they attain the irrevocable cessation of the sixth type of *supramundane* innate afflictions they may still abide in the result of once-returner; they only cease to be once-returners when they achieve the temporary or irrevocable cessation of the ninth (small-small) type of mundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm, and thus become never-returners.

### **Result of never-returner**

The result of never-returner is attained when Hinayana Aryas achieve both the irrevocable cessation of intellectually acquired afflictive obstructions *and* the temporary or irrevocable cessation of the ninth (small-small) type of *mundane* innate afflictions that pertain to the Desire Realm, but do not attain the irrevocable cessation of the ninth type of *supramundane* innate afflictions of the Desire Realm. Hence, Hinayana Aryas newly become never-returners the moment they attain both the irrevocable cessation of intellectually acquired afflictive obstructions *and* the temporary or irrevocable cessation of the ninth (small-small) type of *mundane* innate afflictions of the Desire Realm without at that moment also attaining the irrevocable cessation of the ninth type of *supramundane* innate afflictions of the Desire Realm. Also, they remain never-returners for as long as they do not attain the irrevocable cessation of the ninth type of *supramundane* innate afflictions of the Desire Realm and thus achieve the result of foe-destroyer.

In short, the characteristics of never-returners are:

- (1) They are Hinayana Aryas
- (2) While on the path of seeing they irrevocably eliminated the three fetters (i.e. intellectually acquired afflictive obstructions)

- (3) They temporarily or irrevocable eliminated the ninth type of mundane innate afflictions without irrevocably eliminating the ninth type of *supramundane* innate afflictions
- (4) They have not attained the result of foe-destroyer

Therefore, as explained above, even though never-returners achieve the temporary or irrevocable elimination of the ninth type of *mundane* innate afflictions of the Desire Realm, they do not attain the irrevocable elimination of the ninth type of *supramundane* innate afflictions of the Desire Realm since the attainment of the cessation of the ninth type of *supramundane* innate afflictions of the Desire Realm marks the first moment of the result of foe-destroyer. The attainment of the cessation of the ninth type of *supramundane* innate afflictions of the Desire Realm marks the first moment of the result of foe-destroyer because it also marks the attainment of the ninth type of *supramundane* innate afflictions of each of the eight levels of the Form and Formless Realms, and thus of the subtlest innate afflictive obstructions.

### ***Result of foe-destroyer***

The result of foe-destroyer is attained when Hinayana Aryas attain the irrevocable cessation of intellectually acquired and innate afflictions (i.e. innate afflictions that pertain to the Desire Realm and innate afflictions that pertain to the Higher Realms). Hence, Hinayana Aryas become foe-destroyers when they achieve the cessation of all afflictive obstructions.

They always remain foe-destroyers, but cease to be *Hinayana* foe-destroyers when starting to engage in Mahayana practices in order to cultivate Bodhicitta and enter the Mahayana path of accumulation. At that time they cease to be *Hinayana* foe-destroyers, for they cease to be Hinayanists.

Therefore, the characteristics of foe-destroyers are:

- (1) They are Aryas
- (2) They irrevocably eliminated the three fetters (i.e. intellectually acquired afflictive obstructions)
- (3) They irrevocably eliminated the nine types of *supramundane* innate afflictive obstructions that pertain to each of the nine levels